

Director's Note

These are exciting times at DVI. A diverse group of staff has begun planning for the upcoming centennial of our agency. We began providing services to blind and visually impaired Delawareans in 1909 as the *Delaware Commission for the Blind*. As we approach this significant milestone, our goals are as follows:

- To recognize the history and celebrate the accomplishments of the agency.
- To raise the visibility and public awareness of the agency, its clients and mission.
- To educate the public about the major causes of blindness and vision-related disabilities.

To achieve these goals we envision a multi-faceted celebration which will include numerous activities, involving DVI staff, consumers, advocates and the general public.

The next *DVI Views* Newsletter will feature a special "bonus section" with an agency history as well as a planned "calendar of events" highlighting special centennial activities. As always, the latest information on all DVI activities is available on the internet:

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dvi/index.html>

Sincerely,



Cynthia Lovell, *Director*



**DVI Director,
Cynthia Lovell**



Focus On A Consumer: Blake Roberts

Blake Roberts is a 24 year old lifelong Delawarean who has been an active DVI consumer since shortly after birth at Kent General Hospital in Dover. Blake was significantly premature weighing in at 1 lb. 9 oz., and developed detached retinas as a result of being given too much oxygen.

He first began receiving educational services in the Caesar Rodney School District at age 2 1/2 from teacher of the blind Nancy Frankl. After 6th grade Blake moved to the Lake Forest School District and graduated from Lake Forest High School in June of 2002.

That August, he enrolled in the Terry Campus of Delaware Technical and Community College in the Human Services program. Blake received his AA in Human Services in May of 2006 graduating with honors and a 3.66 GPA, also receiving a plaque of recognition from the English department for being the 2006 “Graduate of the Year.”

Blake has been very appreciative of the lifelong assistance he received from DVI. “All DVI staff members have been professional, they really know their stuff,” he said, adding, “they help whenever I need it, I really mean what I say.”

Blake cited several DVI employees to illustrate his point. One, Barbara Mallory, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the DVI Milford Office, has worked with him since before his graduation from high school to refine his goals and to monitor his educational progress. Another DVI employee, Eddie Jory, provided extensive computer training, including Windows, JAWS (Job Access With Speech) and help with other assistive technologies. Finally, Job Placement Specialist Stacey Bragg, helped him find an internship.



Blake Roberts entering client data at the Client Assistance Program Office, August 2007.

In April of 2007, Blake was accepted for a one year internship with the Client Assistance Program (part of United Cerebral Palsy of Delaware). At CAP Blake works 5 days a week approximately 20 hours.

Included in his responsibilities are: answering the phone, handling paperwork for new clients, photocopying, filing, and faxing. Blake says he really enjoys his experience at CAP and finds it challenging and interesting to be an advocate for persons with disabilities.

He also advocates as a member of the Independent Living Advisory Committee to DVI and the Advisory Council for the Library for the Blind. He is awaiting appointment by Governor Minner to the DVI State Rehabilitation Council.

In his free time Blake enjoys interacting with his 6 year old niece, listening to audio books and old radio programs (The Shadow is his favorite), and reading non-fiction Braille Books. As for the future, Blake is certain of a career in the Human Service field, perhaps as a counselor of the visually impaired, to help them adjust to their blindness. He sums up his philosophy as, "keep a positive outlook on life; don't let a disability be an excuse from achieving your full potential."

Connecting Delawareans with Assistive Technology

Submitted by Beth Mineo Mollica, Executive Director, DATI

The **Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative** is a statewide program that helps Delawareans with disabilities find and acquire the equipment they need to live safely and independently. DATI helps individuals learn about technology and funding options, and connects them with supports for effective equipment use. DATI's services are available to all Delaware residents. There are no eligibility limitations other than state residency. The program addresses the needs of infants through older persons and with the exception of some training events, most DATI services are provided at no cost.

DATI supports three Assistive Technology Resource Centers — one in each county—that are barrier-free, open to the public, and contain a vast array of all types of assistive technology. Highly-qualified Assistive Technology Specialists are available to demonstrate equipment and help identify technology solutions for a given need. Most of the equipment is available for a two-week loan period, enabling users to “try before they buy.” Drop-in visitors are always welcome, but to ensure personalized attention to your needs, it is recommended that you call in advance to make an appointment. There is no charge for equipment demonstrations or equipment loans.

DATI also operates the AT Exchange, which helps to put equipment that isn't being used into the hands of someone who can benefit from it. It works like the “want ads” section of your local newspaper. People can list devices that they no longer need for either sale or donation, or post a listing for devices that they are looking to purchase. The AT Exchange has listings for vision and hearing equipment, adapted vehicles, communication devices, mobility



devices, and much more. You can access the AT Exchange from the DATI website (www.dati.org), in

The AT Messenger, DATI's quarterly newsletter, or by calling the DATI office at 1-800-870-DATI (3284).

Speaking of the DATI website, it contains a wealth of other resources. You can search DATI's vast equipment inventory without ever leaving your chair! Type in a search term (such as **Blind and Low Vision**), and the site will return a complete list of all devices in that category housed at DATI's centers. Detailed listings include device descriptions, manufacturer contact information, and retail cost. You can even reserve a piece of equipment for a demonstration and loan at your local ATRC, all from the website.

Other resources on the website include the **Service Provider Directory** and the **Event Calendar**. The calendar, which is available for public use, includes a variety of disability-related events.

DATI recently began two new programs offering financial loans for the purchase of equipment. The Delaware Assistive Technology Loan Program enables Delaware residents to borrow money for the purchase of any type of assistive devices and the Delaware Telework Equipment Loan Program offers loans for the purchase of equipment that enable someone to work from home or another location remote from the employer. To learn more about these programs or any of DATI's other services, contact the DATI location nearest you:

New Castle County: (302) 651-6790 (voice) • (302) 651-6794 (TDD)
 Kent County: (302) 739-6885 (voice) • (302) 739-6886 (TDD)
 Sussex County: (302) 856-7946 (voice) • (302) 856-6714 (TDD)

2007 Teen Weekend — A Huge Success

On August 3, 2007, ten visually impaired teenaged students along with staff and volunteers from the Division for the Visually Impaired met at the Landis Lodge on Newport-Gap Pike to hold the Teen Weekend event. The weekend provides a

fun environment for the students to learn new skills which will help them to become successful and independent adults. During the weekend they participated in a mock job fair which included networking, resume writing and the opportunity to meet and talk with professionals in the retail, legal and banking professions. There were budgeting, shopping and meal planning activities as well as: crafts, swimming and socializing at the D.J. dance party. The Teen Weekend event is jointly sponsored by the Delaware Association for the Blind and the Division for the Visually Impaired.



Consumer Volunteer Ryan Higgins (left) looks on as DVI VR Specialist Karin Elterich conducts a mock job interview at the 2007 Teen Weekend

Extra, Extra, Extra: Have You Heard?

The Disabilities Law Program is here to help!

The Delaware Disabilities Law Program (DLP) is a special project of Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., a non-profit law firm and advocacy organization. The DLP provides free legal services to persons with a disability who have a legal problem related to that disability. Services are prioritized based on input from consumers and community groups.

Cases the DLP has handled for persons with visual impairments include: fair housing cases involving service animals; cases under the Americans with Disabilities Act involving public accommodations (such as restaurants and taxi services) refusing to accommodate consumers; and cases involving problems with public benefits such as SSDI or Medicaid.

If you have a legal problem, please do not hesitate to call for legal assistance! The DLP has an office in each county:

Wilmington office:	(302) 575-0660
Dover office:	(302) 674-8500
Georgetown office:	(302) 856-0038

We look forward to serving you.



News from Delaware Industries for the Blind

National Award

The National Industries for the Blind has recently presented the Delaware Industries for the Blind (DIB) two recognition awards for retention and upward mobility of its employees. DIB received a cash award of \$6,750 which is part of \$ 1 million in funding nationwide to reward agencies for the blind that hire, retain and promote blind employees. Approximately 75% of DIB's 57 employees are blind or visually impaired.

New Training Opportunities

In cooperation with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) the DIB has just begun a new staff training program entitled: **Leaders at all Levels.** Staff will be involved in five days of training over the next six to eight month period. Approximately every six weeks an instructor will visit DIB to conduct training geared to help employees better accomplish their tasks. Subjects covered include, **The Basic Principles for Success, Getting the Information You Need, Positive Response to Change, Speaking with Confidence and Helping Your Team Work.** In addition; NIB in cooperation with the Hadley School for the Blind has established a new on-line training opportunity called "NIB Business Basics" which is available for any blind or visually impaired employee.

Going Green

DIB is pleased to announce a new agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to produce a line of plaques made from recycled materials. While this line was developed initially for the EPA, it is hoped that many other customers including government agencies, service organizations and businesses will find purchasing recycled plaques a desirable alternative to the natural wood plaques that have been provided in the past. The DIB engraving department has recently purchased the “Raster” Braille system for engraving. This process should enable the production of more modern and up to date versions of ADA signage as well of more desirable plaques that will have Braille included.



James Gray operates a roto-engraver at the DIB facility in New Castle

ADVOCATES CORNER



Editor's Note: In the Summer Edition of DVI Views we published an article on Accessible Pedestrian Signals and the fact that Delaware's plan for an APS pilot had been stalled. We asked for comments and have received the following feedback from consumer Liz Bottner of Newark.

I am a strong advocate for Accessible Pedestrian Signals, and do think that there is a need for them. I realize the controversy that has risen on this issue, thus stalling the pilot program in Delaware wherein one APS would be installed in each county, and I am very disheartened at this. While not everyone will agree on whether or not APS are necessary, I feel that they should at least be given a try. If someone doesn't want to use one, they don't have to; but that shouldn't take away from others being able to benefit from them. After all, it is only a pilot program; nothing is set in stone, the APS that would be installed for the duration of the pilot project would not necessarily be permanent.

As both a cane and guide dog user, there are some intersections that I travel daily that are quite difficult to cross. Sure, I can listen to traffic cues, and do so, but having an APS at that intersection would make crossing it much less stressful and more fluid. The street is a stressful place for both person and dog, not a place to be second-guessing yourself and become frustrated. Also, with newer cars on the market, and in the advent of hybrid cars becoming more prevalent on the roads, it is not as easy to tune into auditory cues as those cars run much quieter than do older ones. I would strongly urge that the issue of the Delaware APS pilot program be revisited. I, for one, do feel that there is a need for such technology, and cannot see how it would hurt anyone to at least go forward with the pilot program and give it a chance. Who knows, perhaps you will be pleasantly surprised at the results.

Liz Bottner 7/24/07

Support Groups Update

Delaware Association for the Blind will assume leadership of the support groups effective January 2008. DAB is partnering with the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Division for the Visually Impaired to provide peer support and support group services to the visually impaired community.

Support groups offer opportunities to meet others in similar situations to share concerns, clarify feelings, receive support, compare solutions, get information, as well as learn about resources that can help them cope with the situation.

DVI continues to work with the current support group locations for a smooth transition. In the interim, the Senior Rehabilitation Instructors or guests will facilitate the groups. Some topics that will be discussed are: **Understanding Interpersonal Communication, Empowerment, Taking Ownership of Your Life, Community Resources, and Activities of Daily Living Skills** training. In cases where a conflict occurs with the current schedule, we will work with the facility coordinator to reschedule the group if possible.

While this transition takes place, Elisha Jenkins will remain the contact person for the support groups. For additional information please call 302-255-9813.

EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 5** 11:00 a.m. Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.
- 15** White Cane Day
- 18** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

NOVEMBER

- 2** 11:00 a.m. Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Belmont Hall, Smyrna.
- 15** 3:30 p.m. - State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

DECEMBER

- 7** 11:00 a.m. Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind, Milford State Service Center.

- 20** 12:00 Noon, State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, Buena Vista Conference Center, New Castle.
- 20** 3:30 p.m. State Use Law Commission, Biggs Building, New Castle.

JANUARY, 2008

- 4** 11:00 a.m. Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind. Location TBD.
- 17** 3:30 p.m. State Use Law Commission, Biggs Bldg. New Castle.

FEBRUARY

- 1** 11:00 a.m. Governor's Advisory Council on the Blind. Location TBD.
- 21** 3:30 p.m. State Use Law Commission, Biggs Bldg., New Castle.

Homebuilding of the Future: Universal Design

Steve Tull, of Tull/Ramey Builders in Seaford is a leading proponent of “Universal Design”, a style of building to maximize accessibility for all ages and levels of ability. As the population nationwide and in Delaware ages, this type of homebuilding makes more and more sense according to Tull.



DVI staff from the Milford State Service Center pose with Steve Tull in front of his Universal Design Home in Seaford. From left, Stacey Bragg, Shawn Musgrove, Steve Tull, Dindee Cordeiro, and Barbara Mallory.

Examples of universal features in housing are:

- Handles for doors and drawers that require no gripping or twisting to operate, such as lever or loop handles
- Living space on one floor or stair landings big enough to accept lifts
- Audible and visual alarm systems
- Storage space within reach of both short and tall people
- Wide doorways.

Tull, who is a member of the Coalition for Universal Design in Delaware, is passionate in his advocacy of the concept, to the point that he has built several of these homes. On a sunny, hot July day, he took a contingent of DVI staff on a tour of his newest Universal Design (UD) home in Seaford. Tull's passion for this design is driven in that he has a son with disabilities who can benefit from UD features.

continued on back cover

Focus on a Consumer: Jalpurnia Trader

36 year old Jal Trader is a poised, articulate entrepreneur, now in her fourth year of operating her own business. Born and raised in Wilmington, she is the owner of Jalpurnia Catrice Day Spa on Lincoln Street. She has also recently developed and marketed her own line of all natural skin care products. This professional, calm business person seems to have it all together.

The story of how she arrived at this level of accomplishment is nothing short of extraordinary. In 1996 Jal was working as an administrative assistant in the economic development organization known as Wilmington Vision 2000. Quite suddenly she was plunged into a health crisis of catastrophic proportion when she suffered a severe allergic reaction to prescribed diet medication. Jalpurnia spent 3 months in Christiana Hospital, after her kidneys shut down. Another consequence of this adverse reaction to the medication was the loss of vision in both eyes from a condition known as “bilateral ischemic maculopathy”. The result was at first total blindness, which later improved to the point that although legally blind she regained some peripheral vision.

It was in the hospital that a nurse referred her to the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI). After her release from the hospital, Jal remembers being in denial when DVI representatives Helen Harper and Joan Markow came to visit her at home. The adaptive equipment DVI was able to provide meant that Jalpurnia could return to her job at Wilmington Vision 2000. Not long after that she was devastated to learn that she had been laid off.

At this point Jalpurnia realized that it was time to switch careers and began planning for employment in the therapeutic area, something that had always been of interest to her. She was again assisted by DVI which paid for a training course in massage therapy at the Dawn



NBC-10 reporter Edie Huggins (left) poses with Jalpurnia Trader following the taping of the August 29 Evening News Segment.

Institute which resulted in her being licensed and finding employment in a Wilmington Spa.

While employed, Jal was exposed to the wide range of spa services available and decided that training as an esthetician would provide her with skill sets that would enable her to open her own business. After DVI was able to help once again with tuition, she received the training in skin care and was licensed as an esthetician. Upon completing this course Jal wrote a business plan, found space and opened Jalpurnia Catrice Day Spa on Lincoln Street in 2003.

She is very grateful for the assistance the agency gave her in her time of need and for sticking with her as her situation changed over the years. This assistance has motivated her to give back to the community by helping others who are blind or who are suffering from other disabilities or diseases.

Jal credits her family, her faith in God and her determination which have enabled her to overcome her health problems and to succeed in the business world. Her future goals are to educate people about the therapeutic benefit of spa treatment and to encourage others who face challenges as she did to persevere. Regarding her own business, Jal envisions replicating her spa through franchising and to expanding her line of skin care products by having them available in retail locations.

Editor's Note: Jalpurnia was featured in a NBC-10 broadcast news segment in August. Reporter Edie Huggins interviewed Jal and showcased her spa services and skin care products in the segment. More information about the spa and skin care products can be found on the internet at: www.jcdayspa.com

myReader CCTV by HumanWare

Reviewed by Tanya Nicole Servis



Closed-circuit Televisions (CCTV) are used every day by visually impaired individuals with varying degrees of success to make reading more comfortable. Despite the advancing technology, there are still many low vision consumers who shy away from CCTV use for reasons such as: there is no way to change the polarity from normal (black type on a white background) to reverse (white type on a black background) and no way to move the paper at a steady pace. I know this because I was one such consumer. Until I used a **myReader**, the HumanWare Company's version of a CCTV, I hated CCTV's. This was largely due to the fact that I could not move the tray smoothly enough to keep the letters from blurring as they scrolled across the screen. The HumanWare Company has managed to solve this and other common CCTV usage issues making for a much better reading experience.

The **myReader** is similar to most CCTV's in the sense that the reading material is placed on the tray and the necessary size adjustments are made to enable people with low vision to read more comfortably. What makes the **myReader** different is the fact that users no longer have to move the paper or change the focus manually. The **myReader** utilizes a camera to capture an image of the material to be read. Once this is complete and any size adjustments are made, users simply move a dial to begin the automatic scrolling at the desired speed. This makes for a much clearer picture as the scrolling action is kept to a uniform pace. The scrolling speed ranges from very slow to a surprisingly rapid pace that can easily be adjusted or stopped at any time.

The other major advantage I found with the camera is that once the image is captured, the page can be removed from the tray. With this, users no longer have to worry about the page becoming misaligned as they are reading. Of course, if a user prefers to move the page themselves he or she can do so in live mode where the camera works the same way as any other CCTV. This is still the best way to read things such as maps as the automatic scrolling action only moves in straight lines.

There are also several color scheme options users can choose from such as yellow letters on a blue background. This is a benefit to those who see some colors better than others. I also found switching the color scheme helped when viewing text on paper that was off-white. There are some disadvantages here though. For example, the latest Harry Potter book was printed in a font that only showed up well in normal polarity. Those who prefer reverse polarity may find this difficult. It will take some experimenting for each user to determine which scheme works best for them in each situation.

Although it took some experimenting to determine how best to read printing on a beige paper, I had no problems reading print off of colored paper. It was easy to see flyers printed on florescent pink, yellow, blue, and red paper. I did find that these pages were best viewed in normal polarity however. The colors did not show up quite as well when I placed a newspaper under the camera but it certainly made it easier to read the fine print on coupons.

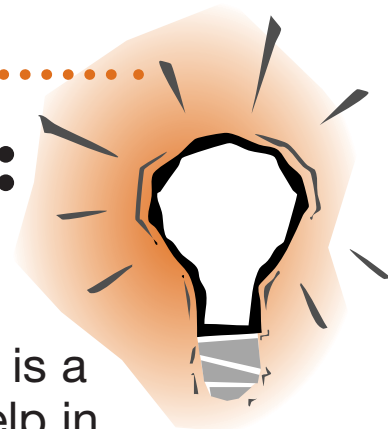
Unfortunately, there are some drawbacks as well. For example, when I placed one of my college textbooks containing glossy pages underneath the camera, the image became difficult to read. There was quite a glare and it was also easy to see the printing on the other side of the paper. This made reading the page difficult. I was also unable to read a Bible with the **myReader** due to the pages being so thin that the print from the back of the page was easily visible.

Perhaps one of the most innovative things about the **myReader** is the ability to set margins. It is easy to program the camera to scroll across the page and stop at a set point making it possible to end the image where the line of print ends. It is much easier to read a page containing columns this way since users can choose to focus on one column at a time. I found this to be useful for things such as bank statements or when reading recipes. Those who do a lot of reading will enjoy this feature as it speeds up the reading time by smoothly going from one line to the next while skipping the white space of the margins.

I found the **myReader** to be extremely easy to use given how many features it has. The control panel is a simple set of distinct buttons and dials designed to make using the CCTV as easy as possible. In all, there are just four buttons, two dials, and one trackball on the control panel. The buttons are for capturing the image, moving to the next line, switching between Live Mode and Viewing Mode, and changing the view of the reading material. Located on the lower portion of the screen itself is the power button and brightness adjustment. Setting the margins is one thing that may cause difficulty to some since it involves using the trackball to align the cursor, in this case a large square, with the edge of the margin. This takes some getting used to. Depending upon what setting is being used, the square can be a little difficult to see.

Over all, HumanWare's **myReader** is a great product with far more pros than cons. Those who have had difficulty using standard CCTV's should try the automatic scrolling and various settings offered by the **myReader**. As a college student with a full course load and a lot of reading, it has certainly helped relieve a good deal of eye strain for me. It is not perfect but it is certainly better than any other CCTV I have ever used.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE: *News You Can Use*



The Delaware Energy Assistance Program (DEAP) is a federally funded program for families that need help in meeting their costs of home energy. The Division of State Service Centers (DSSC) administers this program on a contractual basis with Catholic Charities, Inc. To be eligible a family must have income no more than 200% of the federal poverty level.

2007-2008 Countable Income Limits - 200% FPL

Family Size	Gross Annual Income	Gross Monthly Income
1	20,420	1,702
2	27,380	2,282
3	34,340	2,862

You might be able to get help with your energy bills. It is important to call **Catholic Charities** to find out where and how to apply for assistance:

Kent County: (302) 674-1782
New Castle County: (302) 654-9295
Sussex County: (302) 856-6310

Homebuilding of the Future: Universal Design

continued from page 13

Sussex native Tull stands ready to work with agencies, organizations and interested parties in developing more of the UD homes in the future.

For more information about building a Universal Design Home, contact:

Tull/Ramey Builders
107 Pennsylvania Avenue
Seaford, DE 19973
(302) 628-5232



DVI VIEWS

Division for the Visually Impaired, Delaware Health and Social Services

Cynthia Lovell, Director **Bob Goodhart**, Deputy Director

Debra Simpson, Elisha Jenkins, Jack Holloway, Editorial Staff

<http://www.state.de.us/dhss/dvi/index.html>

Please share, recycle or dispose of this document properly



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Biggs Building
1901 N. Dupont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720-1199

**FREE
MATTER
F/T
BLIND**